

Current Comment on Public Events

CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

What is there about the Christian spirit that makes savages of men and women? Why is it that in spite of their continual protestations of love and kindness they still maintain an attitude of brutality? Did there ever exist any of the milk of human kindness in the breasts of the Christian people of Hunterdon, New Jersey, it must have soured and turned to clabber long ago. Although they will point with pride to the Apostle Paul and refer to the great triune taught by him, Faith, Hope and Charity, as the acme of human perfection, the Christians aforesaid are certainly short on their charity and rather long on their heartless indifference to human suffering. It may be that a long and continued association with the Jersey "yellowjackets" has jaundiced their human affections until they appear as walking advertisements of the yellow peril.

Recently the daily press has given publication to a news item under the startling and rather striking headlines,—"Church members want rope used" and by a reference to the article in question it is shown that a band of church members, of Hunterdon, in New Jersey, headed by Rev. C. S. Woodruff, who is said to be holding forth in Flemington, the same state, appeared before Governor Sticks and made a joint, vehement protest against further executive interference with the infliction of capital punishment upon one, John E. Schuyler, convicted of a capital offense and said to have been three times relieved. That such conduct is almost without precedent is unquestioned, but coming at a time when the universal trend of public opinion is against the infliction of legal punishment in forms bordering upon brutality and inhumanity, it is somewhat astonishing that the followers of Calvary's Lamb, should be demanding that the rope be used in this particular case, presumably for the malicious pleasure of having a neck cracked under an edict of law.

Hanging has been a form of inflicting capital punishment in Christian countries for centuries. In times gone past it was imposed for the most trivial offenses. Under the Blackstonian and Benthamite regime during the common law period in England, the death penalty was inflicted in cases of forgery upon proven guilt. The idea was that forgery was so tempting and so easy of commission, that drastic measures were demanded for its suppression. From the growing humanity of the juries there came

a change in the law. Juries were unwilling to bring in a verdict of guilty where the punishment could only be death in such cases where the amount in controversy was trivial. The result was that innumerable forgeries went unpunished and that form of crime rapidly spread all over the country until the bankers and financiers petitioned the parliament to repeal the law and substitute lengthened terms of imprisonment in its stead. This had the desired effect for forgery soon showed signs of diminution. All this came about, however, through the promptings of a higher motivated humanity. Upon the same principle we might go further and assume that we have no moral right to pay another man, through legal forms, to do that which we would be ashamed to do ourselves.

Unless memory be in error the legislature of New Jersey has abolished death by hanging as a medium of inflicting the highest penalty and substituted the electric chair. If this be true, then in any event, this would be the last legal hanging in that state, and it appears that the citizens of that community wish to avoid the disgrace of having such a punishment imposed in their surroundings. But this is evidently unlike the Christian spirit. The latter demand that the hanging take place. There is no mercy, no forgiveness, no vicarious atonement, no pleading for a lost soul, but a firm and rigid insistence upon the fulfillment of a brutal law in order to gratify a base desire for revenge. Assuming that the murderer has repented of his act, then upon death, his soul will be jerked to glory instantaneously. In the course of time these same Christians who are now demanding the use of the rope, expect to reach the same destination, and we now wonder if these can dwell together in unity, peace and concord, upon meeting over there, for be it known that of such is the kingdom of heaven.

CANNED SERMONS A SPECIALTY.

Canned goods has been a rage in America. Every conceivable variety of food has been canned, placed upon the market and bought for home consumption. Fruits, vegetables, meats, cereals, in fact, everything that could be canned has been and immense profits have been realized. To a great extent industrial and commercial necessities have led to such measures and the prediction has been made that it is only a question of time before one or other of the big monopolistic combines will un-

dertake to can the elements and dispense them at so much per can. The latest innovation has been the phonograph whereby the sound of the human voice has been successfully canned and made to reproduce itself. This success has opened up a wide variety of possibilities. Could the phonograph have been in use during the days Jesus is said to have walked the earth and worked among the Jews, it would have been a great catch for him to have stood before a phonograph and repeated his sermon on the amount that the tone and manner of his voice could have been preserved for underneath posterity. But such was not the case. The invention was unknown to Jesus and his followers. Neither could foresee such a possibility. But there are means of recuperation at hand.

It is now reported that a score of pramaphone records have been made by musical artists in Paris; that these records have been solemnly placed in vacuum containers and as solemnly buried in the crypt of the Paris Opera House. Under the agreement by which they were made the containers are not to be opened until full one hundred years have elapsed when they are to be opened and the records thus made reproduced to a wondering people in the next century. Just imagine the extent to which this scheme could be carried out. If one of our most orthodox, mammon serving parsons could be induced to preach for one of these records and then turn it loose a century hence, the people would then be able to form an estimate of the value of Christian propaganda in this day and age and we can imagine the supreme contempt that would be displayed. Suppose Dr. Aked, the imported; Dr. Parkhurst, the rampant; or any of the time-serving parsons of the present could be induced to make one of these records for a century of preservation, what think ye the people of the next century would say concerning them? Suppose the Pope of Rome should read one of his encyclicals into it, what startling effect would it have on the generations to follow? Then the advertisement—"Canned sermons a specialty."

COUSTED BY PRAYER.

Prayer and faith may not be able to move mountains in spite of the contrary teaching and preaching, but according to the statement of Mrs. Henry Lewis, a resident of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, her god, that is the particular god she worships, has through her faith and prayer, removed a family of bugs from their residence in her nasal organ. Although the lady expresses her devotion and belief in the "Great Physician" it is not reported whether he has sent in his bill for fees as most physicians do. It is to be presumed that as